

## MENTAL HEALTH LOCAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

February 9, 2009 - MINUTES

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**In attendance:** Council Members: Chairman Jacob Wagner, Tom Peluso, Lori Marchak, Jerry Johnson, Charlotte Kress, Jan Bjork, Kathy Berg, Carolyn Robinson, Shelly Johnson, and Bill Murdock; Advocacy Members: John Watson (Open Arms Drop-In Center), Dennis Cox (AMDD), Andrea Lower (Court Services), Jana Lehman (MMHA), Betsy Garigues (KMA), and Dorothy Eck; and Guest Eric Bryson (City Commissioner); and Staff: Glenda Howze.

**Call to Order and Introductions** - 12:10 PM. Chairman Wagner opened the meeting and allowed for introductions. Commissioner Murdock made a motion to put City Commissioner Eric Bryson on the committee as a voting member. Mr. Peluso seconded the motion. In discussion it was determined that this would be done if the bylaws allow it, and if they don't, then they will be modified to allow this position. All voted aye. Motion carried unanimously. Mr. Watson inquired as to how he might become a voting member. Mr. Peluso made a motion to appoint an additional consumer position to the council, with Mr. Watson filling the position. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. In discussion, Ms. Bjork questioned the oversight of the Drop-In Center and whether this would be a conflict of interest. Mr. Wagner stated that Mr. Watson could abstain from any decisions that would directly affect the Center or Mr. Watson. Ms. Howze stated that in the past the committee made a determination that no one from the Mental Health Center could fill the provider slot as it would be a conflict of interest. Mr. Watson could, however, fill a consumer slot and abstain as necessary. Mr. Peluso amended his motion to note that Mr. Watson would fill an official position as a consumer. Mr. Johnson amended his second. All voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

**Public Comment** - Mr. Watson provided a report from the Drop-In Center for the first six months. He stated that from July through December there were 1741 people through the door. In January there were 380 visitors. He provided an explanation of the report (attached to minutes). The DRA (Dual Recovery Anonymous) will be listed with the other "anonymous" meetings in the paper this week. On Saturday there were 18 participants in this meeting, and there has been 8-18 at every meeting since they began. They are going to approach the CSAA for funds for literature for this program as there isn't any developed at this point. This group is only one of four in Montana. Mr. Watson is also working to get together a WRAP training with the CSAA and he may be the facilitator. He noted that the Center truly serves as a crisis until and deals with situations daily that staff is able to assist in de-escalation. Commissioner Murdock inquired about the homeless and how much they are served through the Center. Mr. Watson explained that the homeless here are a very transient population and the Center rarely sees repeat visitors from this group, but they have had some visitors. Mr. Watson also noted that they now have a clothes closet open for visitors to "shop" from. The break room was completed by an Eagle Scout who had a project to do. They have also added a panic/anxiety group and a women's group. The hours of operation are 10-4 on Saturday and 9-6 M-F. On the consumer surveys a high interest for Sunday hours was expressed but this is not doable with the current budget. He hopes to continue to work with and educate the CIT group so that law enforcement officers can be aware of the Center and the things that it offers so that referrals can be made. There is a volunteer meeting on Wednesdays at 10AM. The grant that the Center operates under requires that all volunteers be consumers. Mr. Watson stated that he feels he has three minutes from the time a newcomer enters the Center to greet them and make them feel comfortable and welcome, or they probably won't return. The Center operates with one full-time employee (John) and two part-time employees. This is not enough staffing to meet the needs of the great number of visitors the Center is experiencing.

**Approval of Minutes** – Mr. Bjork noted a typing error in the minutes and Ms. Howze agreed to correct it. Ms. Bjork made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of Letter of Support for a Department of Court Services Grant for Justice and Mental Health Collaboration** – Ms. Lower reported that she is submitting this grant for funding for the CIT program and court diversion. Mr. Peluso made a motion that this request is consistent with the priorities of the Council and that the Gallatin Mental Health Local Advisory Council endorse, in writing, the grant as described by Ms. Lower. Ms. Robinson seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

**Legislative Update** – A list was distributed. HB 130, 131 and 132 of highest priority. Commissioner Murdock encouraged the group to let the Commission know what is high priority so that our lobbyist can work on these bills. HB 111 was tabled. Ms. Eck reported that there were no negative votes on HB 130-132. The KMA requests support on HB 65, 66 and 243. Discussion took place about youth services. Mr. Johnson stated that the LAC can address kids if it feels it is important; there is nothing precluding us from doing so. Mr. Cox noted an LAC pamphlet that discusses the coordination of mental health providers and law enforcement. It includes school personnel and doesn't exclude kids. The system at the State level separates adults and children but the community level doesn't have to be the same way. Mr. Wagner commented on the history of the division of adult and children services.

**Priority Table Review and Discussion of 2009 Goals (if time)** – There was not time for this discussion.

**Agenda for March Meeting** – Discussion regarding membership – evaluate who is on the committee, who attends and who has significant absences.

**Other** – Mr. Peluso reported that the building project is moving along well. The grant is due on Friday. They are putting out to bid with a construction loan if the grant request is not successful. Mr. Watson asked for a letter of support from the LAC for the funds for DRA materials. Ms. Marchak made a motion to approve said letter of support. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried unanimously. Mr. Cox stated that the showing of consumers and providers at hearings in Helena a couple weeks ago was remarkable. The committee was glad to see a solid voice coming to Helena.

**Meeting adjourned** at 1:18 PM